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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Rural Electrification Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

December 17, 1945

To: Members of the Staff
From: Carl Hamilton, Assistant Administrator
Subject: Uniform Procedures for Preparing Correspondence

The purpose of the Correspondence Style Manual of the Department of Agriculture is to establish uniform procedures for preparing correspondence, and is based upon a consideration of acceptable standards in all Government agencies. This Manual should be followed closely in REA. Each bureau of the Department, however, finds it necessary to adopt some special procedures because of requirements peculiar to its program. The purpose of this, and succeeding memoranda, is to describe procedures to be used within REA which supplement the Manual's procedures.

1. When a system designation is used as the subject of a letter, the correct name of the cooperative as well as the system designation should be given. Example:

Subject: Texas 7 Bell
Bartlett Electric Cooperative, Inc.

However, when the letter is addressed to the cooperative, only the system designation should be included in the subject.

2. The following is the best way to begin a letter sent to REA by Mr. John Doe in which he encloses a letter from Mr. James Roe:

"This is in response to your letter of June 10, 1945, enclosing a letter to you from Mr. James Roe concerning ..."

3. Effective immediately all letters for the Administrator's signature will be jacketed (Form ADM-41 [4-3-44]). Formerly this was done only when it was necessary that the letter be routed to two or more divisions.
4. As a general rule, "we" should be used rather than "I" in all letters. When the writer of the incoming letter is to be addressed otherwise in a letter prepared for the signature of the Administrator, the Deputy Administrator, or the Assistant Administrator, a notation will be made on the jacket giving the desired salutation and indicating the use of the first person singular.

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5. "Sincerely" should be used in all letters prepared for signature of the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, or the Assistant Administrator. The complimentary close should be typed slightly to the right of the center of the page and two spaces below the last line of the text. In no case should the words "Deputy," "Assistant," or "Acting" be typed on the letter with the title. This will be stamped on when necessary. The title "Administrator" should always be typed 5 spaces below and 10 spaces to the right of the complimentary close. Example:

Sincerely,

Administrator

6. The legend on file copies of letters, telegrams, or memoranda should identify the dictator, the stenographer, and the date of preparation as follows:

JADoe:MW
1-28-45

When a letter is rewritten, changing the substance of the letter, the legend should be written as follows:

JADoe:MW
1-28-45
Rewritten: JADoe:MW
1-29-45

However, when a letter is retyped for minor corrections that do not change the substance of the letter, the legend should appear as follows:

JADoe:MW
1-28-45
Retyped: MW
1-29-45

7. The initials of the division chief and others approving the correspondence shall be placed on the salmon copy of the correspondence marked for Central Records.

8. Letters for the Administrator's signature should be assembled in the following order:

- Jacket
- Original of letter
- Enclosures, if any
- Envelope, lengthwise, flush with top margin
- Protecting sheet of blank manifold paper
- Carbon copies, on letterhead tissue, to be sent out of the organization
- Envelope (arranged as above)
- Protecting sheet of blank manifold paper
- Central Records copy (salmon or blue)
- Incoming letter and attachments
- Other carbon copies to persons in the organization
- Dictator's copy

9. A collective noun which represents a group acting as a whole, or as a unit, is singular. Pronouns referring to such collective nouns must be singular. Examples:

WRONG: The cooperative gave their picnic last Sunday.

RIGHT: The cooperative gave its picnic last Sunday.

WRONG: After the board of directors had considered the matter, they decided to postpone further action.

RIGHT: After the board of directors had considered the matter, it decided to postpone further action.

10. It is extremely important to answer all questions raised in an incoming letter. The main issue and each subordinate issue should be met squarely. If consideration of certain matters must be postponed in whole or in part or must be referred to others, these facts should be explained. If it is necessary to withhold information or postpone a decision, special care should be taken to prevent any impression of evasion.
11. An acknowledgment should be prepared at once if it is obvious that undue delay will be involved in assembling the necessary information to answer the incoming letter, indicating that the matter is being given immediate consideration but that some time will be necessary to secure the information.
12. Borrowers and other correspondents have every reason to expect a prompt and complete reply to their letters. Frequently the only basis on which outsiders may judge the efficiency of the agency is the promptness and thoroughness of the replies made by REA.

The following time schedule is established for correspondence prepared for the signature of the Administrator:

Congressional correspondence - reply to be prepared and forwarded within three working days from referral date.

Other correspondence - reply to be prepared and forwarded within four working days from referral date.

Letters returned by the Administrator's Office for rewriting - letter to be rewritten and forwarded within two working days from date of return.

Carl Hamilton

NOTE TO SECRETARIES: This memorandum should be filed with and made a part of your copy of the Correspondence Style Manual.